

Brothers Corporation

FEB 18 2015

**DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & ZONING****Exhibit 3**

To: Scott Gustin, Burlington Planning & Zoning
Burlington Development Review Board Member
From: Patrick O'Brien
Re: Project Narrative for Garden Street Apartments (formerly Grove Street Apartments).
Date: February 17, 2015

It has been almost a year since we received Preliminary approval for this project and since then we have been diligently working on all of the requested changes as well as obtaining all of the applicable state permits. I wanted to have as much of those in hand so all of their requests could be put on the plans as well. All too often I've received final approval from the municipality only to then have to change the plans and re-apply due to a change requested by another permitting authority.

With that said, I would like to start with the 22 Conditions that were attached to our Preliminary Approval. Below, in chronological order are our responses to these requirements. The second part of this narrative explains the changes relating to these conditions in more detail.

1. This preliminary plat approval in no way grants or implies final plat approval. Final plat application shall be filed in accordance with Section 10.1.9, Final Plat Approval Process, of the CDO and per these Conditions of Approval. No response required.
2. Prior to final plat application, written acceptance of the proposed public traffic and pedestrian transportation improvements shall be obtained from the Dept. of Public Works. This will be coming directly from DPW. Written approval of the proposed public water and sewer service upgrades shall also be obtained from the Dept. of Public Works. This will be coming directly from DPW.
3. Prior to final plat application, written acceptance of the proposed improvements to Schmanska Park and its parking lot shall be obtained from the Dept. of Parks & Recreation. Completed, Exhibit # "6".
4. Prior to final plat application, written acceptance of the proposed street trees along Grove Street shall be obtained from the City Arborist. Completed, see Exhibit # "7".
5. Prior to final plat application, written acceptance of the single access drive and its sufficiency for emergency service vehicles shall be obtained from the Fire Marshal. Completed, see Exhibit # "8".
6. Prior to final plat application, a boundary survey by a VT licensed land surveyor shall be provided and shall show all proposed boundary adjustments. Completed, see sheets PL 1 & PL 2.
7. Prior to final plat application, the applicant shall contact the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to inquire as to studies of the area that may indicate heightened archaeological significance. Completed, see Exhibit # "9".
8. Prior to final plat application, a revised project phasing schedule shall be provided that estimates what will be constructed and when it will be constructed. Completed, see Exhibit # "4". The phasing schedule shall be consistent with the inclusionary housing requirements of Sections 9.1.18 & 9.1.19 of the CDO. If the inclusionary housing units are to be contained within a single building as presently proposed, the inclusionary housing units must be constructed first. Written acceptance of the proposed inclusionary housing shall be obtained from the city's Housing Trust Fund. The phasing schedule must also provide for the duplex housing units to be built early during the project construction. Please refer to my narrative for

additional information on inclusionary housing and design.

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9. Prior to final plat application, the site plan shall be substantially revised to strengthen the interior streetscape and to provide for a more gradual transition between smaller buildings to the largest apartment buildings. Doing so may be as recommended in Sec. 6.2.2 (h) of these findings or otherwise. Completed, please see my narrative and attached plans for details.

10. Prior to final plat application, the applicant shall investigate providing a second access into the site to improve connectivity with the surrounding neighborhood. If feasible, the second access shall be depicted on final plat plans. The Investigation proved that second access would potentially improve vehicle and pedestrian connectivity to Grove Street, but would be unsafe due to minimal site distances (it would be located where there is a curve in the road) and would be counter intuitive to the environmental restoration work (culvert removal). See narrative for additional details.

11. Final plat plans shall depict mechanical equipment, "hot box," and outdoor mailbox details. Completed, see plan sheet PL 1-2 and attachment # (10).

12. Final plat plans shall contain consistent building labels between the elevation drawings and site plans. Elevation drawings in the final plat plans shall also include finished grade information on all building sides for all buildings proposed. Completed, see Architectural Plans and Final Grading Plan sheet L-2 and narrative for details. The final plat plans shall also include accurate perspective drawings. Completed, see Illustrations 1-4. The elevation drawings as presented at preliminary plat are not approvable. Completed, see Architectural Plans.

13. Final plat plans shall include a revised clubhouse building design with greater emphasis on perceived verticality. Completed, see sheet A-7.0

14. Final plat plans shall include installation details for the proposed exterior building materials. Completed, each architectural elevation includes installation details and specs.

15. Final plat plans shall depict a concrete public sidewalk across the access drive into the development. Completed.

16. Final plat plans shall include information relative to amenities (i.e. water access, tool sheds, etc.) for the community gardens. Completed, all formal amenities are depicted on the plans and described in the narrative.

17. Final plat plans shall address the feasibility of solar energy or hot water, or at least solar-ready construction, for the development. Due to the availability of Natural Gas, all other alternative energy methods are currently not cost beneficial. We are however constructing the buildings with sleeves in appropriate locations in the event that the benefit of solar roof top panels becomes financially beneficial in the future.

18. Final plat plans shall include fixture cut sheets and illumination levels for building entries shall be provided. Completed, see sheet 3.0 for illumination levels and attachment # 11 for cut sheets.

19. Final plat plans shall include written approval of the project stormwater management system and erosion prevention and sediment control plan from the Conservation Board and the Stormwater

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Administrator. We have worked with the City's Stormwater Administrator to design a system that surpasses the current standards. The written approvals from her as well as the Conservation Board are pending and will be received prior to the DRB meeting.

20. The final plat plans shall include a parking management plan per Sec. 8.1.15 of the CDO for the requested parking waiver. Completed, see attachments 5 & 5A.

21. The existing 59' tall concrete structure immediately along Grove Street shall be retained and integrated into the project design. Details shall be provided in the final plat plans. See sheet A 10. Buildings on the lower (eastern) plateau of the property may utilize this structure for a height limit. Buildings on the upper (western) plateau shall not exceed the standard 35' height limit. See architectural elevations and grading plan details.

22. Prior to final plat approval, Conservation Board shall review the project under Sections 4.5.4 (c) and (d) – riparian and wetland overlay zones. We agree.

As you will see from the plan set, we have made several modifications to the project and offsite improvements not only due to the above conditions, but also due to various requests by department heads (and staff), our neighbors and other permitting authorities. There are also market driven design changes made by us and our consultants. We feel that all of these changes both enhance the project and further the project's conformance to the BDO. Below is a description of the larger changes.

1. To further conform to the existing neighborhood along Grove Street, We have increased the number of smaller duplex and six plex buildings on the upper plateau 13. We have also reduced the size of the three larger buildings from three 33 unit buildings to a 21 unit, a 22 unit and a 33 unit. We also repositioned the buildings and brought them more parallel with the street and sidewalks. We feel that these changes have resulted in a softer transition from the smaller duplexes along Grove Street to the larger buildings in the rear of the project while and at the same time strengthened the interior streetscape and pedestrian circulation within the project.

2. To conform to the 35' height restriction on the upper plateau, the finished grade on every side of each building is just a few inches below the finish floor elevation of each building. The exceptions to this rule include one end of the larger buildings where we enter the underground garages, which obviously has to be 10 feet below finish floor elevation. In order to conform to the 35' restriction, we placed all underground parking for these buildings fully below grade. The proposed buildings heights on the upper plateau are as follows: Duplex's = 26', six plex's = 34', 21 unit = 24', 22 unit = 34' and the 33 unit = 34'.

3. We lowered the overall density from 245 to 232 units. These units were previously within the upper plateau and the largest single reduction was accomplished by removing a story from Building I, which went from 33 units to 22 units once a story was removed.

4. We are proposing to renovate portions of the old plant to provide a formal lookout and pedestrian & cycling rest area. The lookout will include a pavilion with benches and will also include a memorial which will hold two plaques. One plaque will briefly describe industrial history of the site and the other will be a memorial to Stuart D. Ireland, the company's founder. The lookout will remain private because neither the Parks Department nor the Street Department wants to incur the cost to maintain the structure. The Parks Department did guide us in the planning of the pavilion. No buildings on the lower plateau will be higher

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than this structure, which is a condition of our Preliminary Approval.

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5. We have added a permanent sign in the island at the entrance. It will consist of black letters and be placed on a concrete wall. No lighting for the sign is proposed.

6. We have added a larger and expandable community garden area and edible plantings around the project, which include an apple orchard as well as group plantings of black raspberry, raspberry and blueberry bushes.

7. We have designed a phasing plan that will conform to the 8th Condition of our Preliminary Approval. The phasing plan is designed to minimize the areas where construction traffic and resident traffic (vehicle and pedestrian) will co-exist. We will explain and show you in detail (at our DRB meetings) how this will work. Submitting the plan without being able to explain it would be too confusing, it needs to be explained. I have included a graphed timeline (exhibit 11-A) that depicts the phasing, and as you will see we are building the majority of the duplexes in the first 2 phases, which was part this Condition. In regards to the Inclusionary requirements, we will certainly meet them. We understand that if we place all of the inclusionary in 1 building, than that building shall be built first. We also understand that if we do not, than the inclusionary units shall be offered in the same timeline as the market rate units.

8. We have revised the design of the parking lot area for Syzmanska Park in conjunction with both Parks and Recreation and the Department of Public Works. The only area where the two departments did not agree on was if the sidewalk between the parking area and Grove Street. Parks and Recreation wants the sidewalk to be against the curb in the parking lot which will allow a wider green strip between the sidewalk and Grove Street. DPW wants the sidewalk to be in the middle of the green strip. We have shown what DPW wants. These details are shown on Sheet S-8

9. We have redesigned the Club House to give it a more vertical look. The clubhouse will include the rental office as well as the following amenities: Outdoor pool with sun deck, interior fitness room, a complete kitchen, meeting room, lounge and library. Upstairs there will be another lounge area with a large screen TV (for viewing and electronic gaming) and an area that will house ping pong and pool tables.

10. We have included one story maintenance building that will have a small office and enough room to park maintenance equipment. We have also designed an area adjacent to this building to hold seasonal material for the grounds crew.

11. At the request of the DPW we relocated the pump station to the lowest level of the site and have included a large holding tank.

12. In conjunction with Burlington Electric Department, we have designed a non-traditional layout to the electrical system. Typically the distribution system and associated above ground boxes run parallel to the street and negatively affect both the function and aesthetics of the street scape. Our distribution for the most part is opposite that and runs behind the buildings. The electric layout is depicted on the Utility Plan (sheet S3) and the Easement Plat (Sheet EA2 of 2). The route is easier to follow on the latter plan.

13. We have reduced parking spaces to 397, but therefore need to request a parking waiver to allow us to have 16% less parking spaces than the 448 that are required. A Parking Management Narrative and Parking Management Plan are attached as exhibits 5 & 5A.

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14. At the request of the neighbors, we have agreed to the following items:
- A. We have agreed to shorten our Saturday work hours from 8am to 3pm.
 - B. We have agreed to add a row of 8 -10 foot high White Spruce and White Pine behind building "T" (see sheet L-2).
 - C. As mentioned, we have agreed to reduce the density by 11 units and at the same time reduce the height of Building I by removing a complete story (see sheet A3A.0).
 - D. We have agreed to improve a second crossing on Grove Street, closer to the existing buildings. These improvements include Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, a bump out and associated signage (see sheet S8).
 - E. We have also agreed to narrow the section of road from 34+/- feet 24 +/- feet from the new Syzmanska Parking lot down to the above mentioned bump out (see sheet S8).

All of these requests have been put on the plans, with the exception of item A.

Lastly, we are proposing four Boundary Line Adjustments all of which are depicted on the Boundary Plats.

1. We are quit claiming .81 acres to the Merchant family. During the survey process, Mr. Merchant disagreed with what our surveys had identified in the field and subsequently told me that when he purchased his land from Mr. Scott (the previous owner) that Mr. Scott told him that the lot went all the way to Centennial Brook. Since then Mr. Merchant has assumed that he owned that area and has maintained it and even has a shed on it. We have not used that land, have no use for the land and did not count that land as "developable" in our density calculations and we did not use it for lot coverage calculations so we feel the best thing to do is simply quit any claim that we may have to the land by giving it to the Merchants. This will clear up an ambiguity about the property lines in the future. The Merchants are amenable to this and have signed the appropriate application. See sheet PL2-2 for details.

2. We are completing a Boundary Line Adjustment with the Manhke family. Currently, there is a portion of their property that comes up onto the upper plateau of the Ireland Property. The Irelands did not know this and have always used it. The design of the project always designed around this property line. The Manhke's cannot access this property without crossing the stream and climbing the bank and we both felt that the best thing to do is to swap the 0.23 acres and square off the lot. This has not caused any redesign of the project and we are not using it in our density or lot coverage calculations. The Manhke's are amenable to this swap and have signed the appropriate application. See sheet PL1-2 for details.

3. We are proposing to complete a 0.69 acre boundary line with ourselves. As discussed at sketch and preliminary. The .69 acres is currently part of what we call "Apple Grove" which is the small development to the South of this project. Since sketch and preliminary we have used this area for density and lot coverage calculations. See sheet PL1-2 for details.

4. We are very excited to say that we are proposing to donate 6.22 acres to the Winooski Valley Park District as well as provide them an easement that will enable them to develop a trail system that would start at the Syzmanska Park parking lot and lead them to the parcel we are gifting them, which adjoins landlocked



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property in South Burlington that they already own. This is all depicted on the proposed Plat PL1-1. The WVPD is very excited about this. This land was not used in any of our density or lot coverage calculations. We are also proposing to grant them a trail easement from this parcel north along the edge of the river and then west to the Syzmanska Park parking lot. This will finally and permanently give them access to their previously landlocked parcel. See sheet PL1-2 for details.

Certainly there are other small changes that we have made that will be presented at the meeting. We have worked very hard to incorporate everyone's requirements and suggestions and I truly feel that this project will enhance the aesthetic, environmental and quality of life of the overall neighborhood and become a star in Burlington's housing stock.

Respectfully submitted;

Patrick O'Brien (on behalf of the entire S.D. Ireland family)